

Corrections employees set to see pay increases

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Commissioner J. David Donahue

PLAINFIELD - The Indiana Department of Corrections is raising the bar in hopes of attracting and retaining new employees.

J. David Donahue, prison commissioner, capped of Corrections Employee Appreciation Week by announcing pay raises for about 5,000 of the 8,000 corrections employees in the state. The Indiana General Assembly made the move because of budget cuts Donahue and his employees made to save money over the past few years, he said.

"The reason we received compensation adjustment this year in the general assembly is because of the work that you have done," Donahue said, speaking to employees at the Plainfield Correctional Facility.

He said the raises amount to \$6.3 million annually, and an entry-level corrections officer will receive \$1,000 more a year now.

"We see a lot of retention problems with entry-level positions and it's because we think entry-level salaries are too low," Donahue said.

Wendy Knight, superintendent at the Plainfield facility, said a year and a half ago the IDOC underwent a staffing assessment and determined how many staff members were needed for each facility.

She said overtime hours, except in emergency situations, are no longer allowed, which also reduced the IDOC budget. Vehicle fleets were also assessed and reduced, she said.

"I think it's exciting if you can pay people who are super stars an amount that exceeds expectations,"

Donahue said.

Not all areas will see the raise. Administrative assistants, maintenance workers, and administrative staff will not be included.

Sandi Nelson, an administrative assistant, has worked with IDOC for 21 years. She said not getting a raise wouldn't change her opinion of her work place.

"I love my job," she said.

About The Department of Correction

The Department employs over 8,000 employees and houses 24,000 adult and juveniles in 32 facilities, ranging from minimum to maximum custody, prison camps, juvenile facilities and work release centers. The Department's home page on the Internet can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection>. The Department's Re-entry Site can be found: <http://www.reentry.in.gov>.